Christian Inscriptions in Ancient Rome

Their Message for Today

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CHRISTIAN INSCRIPTIONS IN ANCIENT ROME

THE CONTENTS AND TEACHINGS OF

THE CATACOMBS AT ROME:

A VINDICATION OF PURE AND
:: PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY ::

AND

AN EXPOSURE OF THE CORRUPTIONS OF ROMANISM

DERIVED FROM THE

SEPULCHRAL REMAINS OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS

BY

BENJAMIN SCOTT, F.R.A.S.

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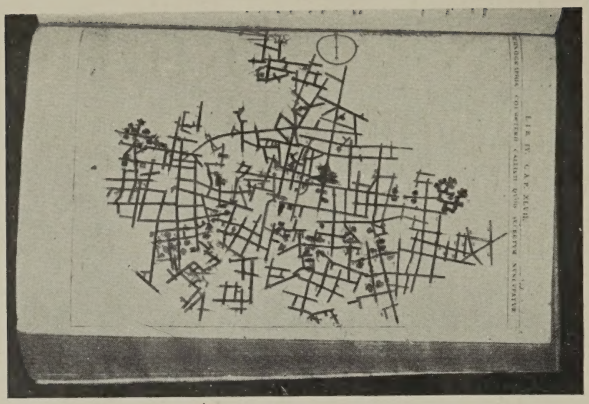
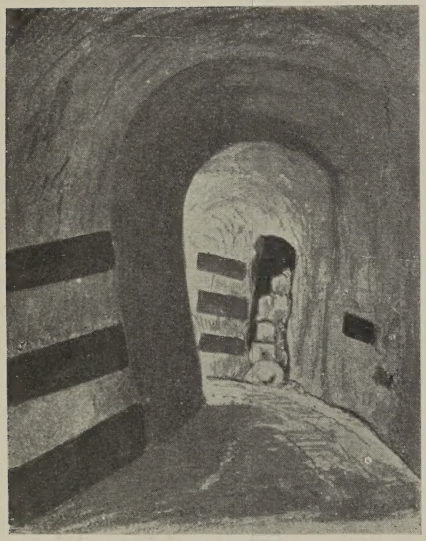
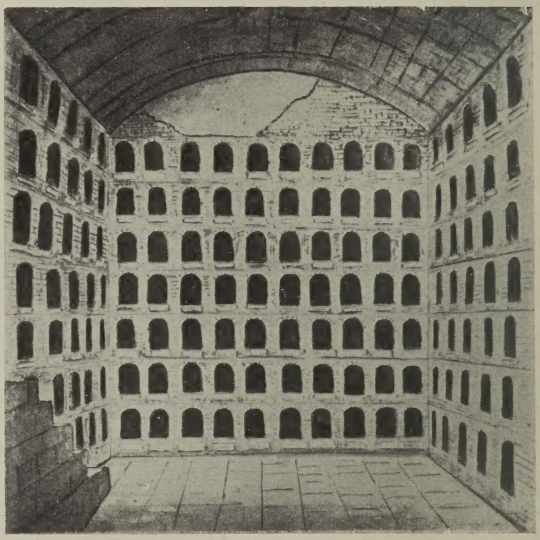


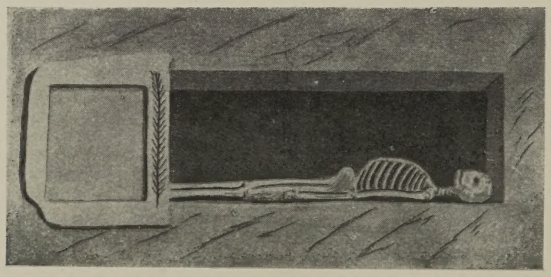
MAP OF THE CATACOMBS OF CALLISTUS. FIG. 1.



ENTRANCE TO A CATACOMB.



COLUMBARIUM. FIG. 5.



LOCULUS. FIG. 4.

CHRISTIAN INSCRIPTIONS IN ANCIENT ROME

THEIR MESSAGE FOR TO-DAY

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BY THE REV.
H. E. FOX, M.A.
Prebendary of St. Paul's Cathedral

PREFACE BY
THE VERY REV. H. WACE, D.D.
Dean of Canterbury

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PREFACE

IN these pages Prebendary Fox affords us all the means of becoming acquainted with one of the most interesting and most valuable records of early Christian life. The Epistles of the New Testament are, of course, the most complete and authentic descriptions of that life, and the precepts and exhortations which they contain possess a special interest when they are regarded as actual pictures of the new spirit which was realized in the society of the Church. That spirit finds also a vivid illustration in the Christian writers of the second century. But there is one monument of early Christian life which has the value of evidence at first hand of the ordinary life of early Christian Society. That monument is to be found in the Catacombs of Rome. They were the burial places of the Roman Christians for three or four centuries, and, though they have been grievously plundered and defaced, there remain a sufficient number of the inscriptions and decorations with which they were adorned, to afford visible testimony to the general character of the Christian spirit in life and in death. They are extremely simple, marked by the brevity and concentration of Roman thought, and the artlessness and sometimes rudeness of untrained hands. But they are more than sufficient to bring us face to face with the souls of those of whom they speak, in life as well as in death. The feelings and the faith which death and the grave call forth are the best witness to the life behind them; and as we stand, by Mr. Fox's help, at the head-stones of some of these resting places, we seem to be in touch with the best thoughts of the Christian men, women and children whose bodies were deposited there. As we walk, with his guidance, through these long galleries, we hear early Christian voices addressing us; and father or mother or child recall to us in a word or two the warm affection, the Christian love and charity, by which the departed soul had been bound to its children or parents. There is a tone of delicate tenderness in these brief words, which sounds like an echo of the characteristic spirit of the new life: "Little children love one another."

There is a great and impressive charm in the suggestion of gentle and true home-life which is thus conveyed to us. But, as Mr. Fox urges, there is a not less valuable revelation of the character of the faith by which this life was animated and which inspired these deaths. As he points out, it was a very simple faith,

and the inscriptions and paintings suggest nothing more than the elementary facts of the sacred history, old and new, especially the central facts of the Gospel, and the two Sacraments. There are none of the later developments of ecclesiastical doctrine and ceremony. It seems to deserve special notice that there are no traces of the use of the Crucifix in the early centuries. The faith which finds expression alike in the inscriptions and in the paintings is essentially a happy faith. It breathes the spirit of St. Peter's first Epistle, " Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us anew unto a lively hope . . . to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." The dominant idea is that of the life and salvation which Christ has bestowed upon His followers. Life and immortality have been brought to light by the Gospel which inspired those men and women and children. The character in which our Lord is, perhaps, most frequently depicted is that of the Good Shepherd carrying the lost sheep on His shoulder. There are no sad representations of Christ. He is risen ; He is the *living* Saviour ; and in His hands, Christians leave their dead " In sure and certain hope " of everlasting life. This is the predominant spirit, and we see in it, no doubt, the motive force of early Christian lives. The Church in those days was charged with a Gospel, a new power in life, and a supreme and perfect hope in death. No change was introduced into the ordinary circumstances of human existence. But all the relations of life, as they stood, were transformed by the spirit of love ; and sorrow, suffering and death were overpowered by the assurance of eternal life and rest with Christ. All this revelation of the Christian spirit, in its first bloom, shines for us on the stones and walls of the Catacombs ; and it is very opportune to bring its illumination to bear, as Prebendary Fox has done in this volume, on the confused and perplexed thought of the present day. This was the message and the inspiration which the Church then brought to the world ; and in proportion as this is still its message, will be its influence and its inspiration in our own day.

H. WACE.

The Deanery, Canterbury.
October, 1920.

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CHRISTIAN INSCRIPTIONS IN ANCIENT ROME

CHAPTER I

CATACOMBS

THE Message of the Gospel, like Him Who was its first witness, is "the same yesterday and to-day, and for ever." Age after age has tested its vitality, and the world has discovered no stronger basis for faith, no clearer guide for conduct, no surer source of hope, than in Jesus Christ, crucified, risen, returning. Among the records of Christianity since the last disciple of the Lord closed his last book with its expectant prayer, few probably have so appealed to the conscience of Christendom as those which early Christians (from the 2nd to the 4th centuries) inscribed on the tombs of their loved ones, many of which are to be read as plainly to-day as when they were first cut. They have far more than antiquarian value. They are as useful to the Bible student as to the historian. They have much to tell us about the foundation of our faith and hope ; much also for our social life, for parents and children, employers and employed. Even their archæological interest, as the writer hopes to show, is not exhausted. Though Christian inscriptions have been found in other countries than Italy, the value and number of those which have been explored in the neighbourhood of Rome are amply sufficient for the purpose of this book. The passing visitor to the Imperial city has little conception of the extent of these burial

places known as the Catacombs. The name itself does not necessarily imply a grave-yard ; it is the compound of two Greek words, which, translated, mean " by the hollows." These were either natural depressions in the neighbourhood of the city, or pits whence sand or stone had been taken, and from which further excavations could easily be made.

The early Christians in Italy followed the Jewish practice of burying their dead (Acts viii. 2), and as probably they could not obtain open ground for a cemetery (their own beautiful word for the grave-yard of those who slept in the Lord), they cut galleries and chambers in the soft tufa rock, which is found in many places outside the city of Rome. Two writers, both living in the 4th century, have given graphic descriptions of the Catacombs. Prudentius, a Christian poet (348–400 A.D.), writes thus : "Among the cultivated grounds not far from the city of Rome, lies a deep crypt, with dark recesses. A descending path with winding steps leads through the dim turnings, and the daylight, entering by the mouth of the cavern, somewhat illumines the first part of the way. But the darkness grows deeper as we advance, till we meet with openings, cut in the roof of the passages, admitting light from above. On all sides spreads the densely-woven labyrinth of paths, branching into caverned chapels and sepulchral halls ; and throughout the subterranean maze, through frequent openings, penetrates the light."—Peristephanon iv.* The other, Jerome (340–420 A.D.), well known as the writer of the Vulgate translation of the Scriptures, and for some years Secretary of Damasus, Bishop of Rome, records this : " When I was a boy in Rome, and engaged in literary pursuits, I used on the Lord's Day, in company with others of my own age and tastes, to visit the sepulchres of the Apostles and Martyrs, and often to go down into the crypts, dug in the depths of the earth, where the walls on either side are lined with the dead ; and so intense is

* Quoted by Withrow, *The Catacombs of Rome*, p. 11.

the darkness, that we almost realize the words of the prophet, 'They go down alive into Hades.' And here and there a scanty aperture, ill deserving the name of window, admits scarcely light enough to mitigate the gloom which reigns below. And as we advance through the shades with cautious steps, we are forcibly reminded of the words of Virgil, 'Horror on all sides; even the silence terrifies the mind.'"*

Professor Orr, describing "certain facts regarding them which may now be regarded as definitely ascertained," goes on to say: "They are allowed to be Christian, and purely Christian cemeteries. They are of enormous extent; the number of the dead buried in them mounts up to millions; the time allowed for this burial is about three centuries—in reality, little more than two centuries and a half, for the excavations had hardly begun before the second century, and the number interred after the middle of the fourth century was small in proportion to those in the preceding period. After the sack of Rome by the Goths in A.D. 411, interment within them ceased. The excavations consist of galleries and chambers sometimes in descending levels of from three to five stories, and throughout their entire area are literally packed with graves, the dead being sometimes buried in the floors, as well as in the walls and rooms. What is not so certain is the precise figure to be put on their extent, or on the number of the dead interred in them." As regards the extent, he adopts "the most careful and reliable calculations of Michele Stefano de Rossi, brother and coadjutor of the famous explorer, who, on the basis of the exact measurement of six different Catacombs, reckons the total length of the passages at 537 geographical miles." On a moderate computation he says this gives nearly 4,000,000 graves. Taking the period of interment at the longest, we cannot count more than ten generations of Christians buried in the Catacombs."†

* Hieron. Com. in Ezech. c. 4. † *Neglected Factors in the Study of Early Christianity.*

An interesting map (Fig. 1; see *Frontispiece*) of one of the best known, the Catacomb of Callistus, is given by Aringhi, a 17th century explorer.* Along the walls of the galleries and chambers there are cut in the rock rectangular niches to hold one or two or even more recumbent bodies. Across the opening of these were cemented marble slabs or earthenware panels, on which sometimes a rough inscription was painted with a brush. Two examples, both copied by the writer in the Lateran Gallery, are given here. The first one in English reads thus: "Hope, Peace to thee" (Fig. 2), expressing in words the familiar symbols of the Anchor and Olive branch which they follow. The second is puzzling, till the mason's mistake in placing the last panel first is noted, and the sentence will then be read: "Peace with thee Filumina" (Fig. 3), accompanied with the same conventional emblems. As Christianity reached the wealthier classes more costly memorials were made. The gallery was sometimes enlarged into a chamber which became a sort of chapel, where members of a family were buried, or those who wished their bodies to repose near that of some martyr or leader. The ceiling and walls were often covered with frescoes on various subjects. Decorations and designs representing our Lord, His Mother, or the Apostles, as well as sacred incidents or symbols, are frequent. An interesting

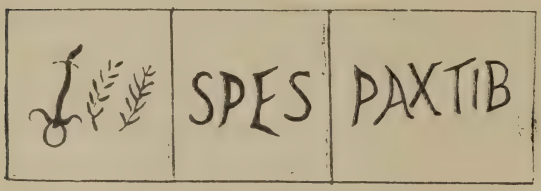

Fig. 2.

Fig. 3.

* Roma Subterranea, Lib. iv. p. 198.

painting on the wall of a chapel in the Catacomb of Sta. Priscilla represents the Virgin with the infant Christ in her lap. She has not the usual nimbus seen in later representations, and beside her stands a man (some say Isaiah, some Joseph), not in the act of worship, but pointing to a star above Mary's head. This is unlikely to be earlier than the 5th century. By this time a great change had taken place in the religious life of Rome. Christianity was no longer persecuted. At first tolerated, then patronised, it lost much of its early character. Piety showed itself not in martyrdom but in the luxurious decoration of the churches and the tombs of the saints. High prices were given for a place near the reputed grave of some martyr, other countries competed for relics of special sanctity to be deposited in their churches. For the wealthier Christian families, large stone sarcophagi were constructed, which usually were covered with beautiful sculpture, sometimes symbolical, but more often referring to persons or incidents mentioned in both Old and New Testaments. But those which remain are only relics after what Withrow describes as the " perpetual spoliation " of the Christian tombs during the Middle Ages by the successive invaders of Italy. Storms and frost for well-nigh eight centuries added to the ruin. It was not till the end of the 16th century that interest in these wonderful remains was aroused by Bosio, who spent thirty-six years in continuous researches among the gloomy corridors of the dead. His labours were prodigious, and often perilous. But nothing quenched his enthusiasm. He did not live to see the printing of the many thousand pages written by his own hand, which are still preserved in the Oratorian Library at Rome. They were published by Aringhi in 1658 under the title *Roma Subterranea Novissima*. The work is all the more valuable as many of his discoveries have disappeared.

In later years the study of the Catacombs and their testimony has increased. The important work of the Italian Archæologists,

Rossi and Marucchi, and of American and British writers, whose books are noted on another page, has added greatly to our knowledge of the faith and facts of primitive Christianity. A large number of the ancient inscriptions have been removed from the tombs, and are carefully preserved in various museums in Rome, such as those in the Vatican, St. John Lateran, the Capitol, and one now known as the National, which formerly bore the name of Kircher. In some cases they are arranged in chronological order, and in most the original locality from which they were taken is duly noted.

CHAPTER II

COLUMBARIA

OF other resting places for the dead hardly any remain except a few Columbaria. These are square chambers built mainly of brick, and partially or a short distance below the surface of the ground. In the walls are rows of niches, like pigeon holes (hence the name), holding the ashes of the dead. Beside or below each was a brief inscription. Most of these, however, as well as the urns have gone. A drawing by the author represents one of the two which he examined in 1914 (Fig. 5 ; see *Frontispiece*). These are in a private vineyard outside the city on the Via Appia, and are seldom seen by tourists who visit the neighbouring Catacomb of Domitilla. There is a well-founded tradition that these Columbaria belonged to the Imperial household, and were used for the burial of servants, freedmen and others of higher rank.

In his commentary on St. Paul's letter to the Philippians, Bishop Lightfoot has a long and interesting note on " Cæsar's Household," mentioned in ch. iv. 22 of that Epistle. He refers to these Columbaria, and gives reasons for believing that the period in which they were used included the reigns of the Emperors Claudius and Nero, and that at this time the Imperial household contained a very large number of slaves, freedmen and foreigners among the servants and officials ; of the latter he gives a list of

fifty different posts which were filled by them. It is very probable that quite a large number of these may have been Christians, and that some of them owed their conversion to the preaching of the Apostle.

This opinion is confirmed by the fact that many names of his friends to whom he sent the greetings recorded in the last chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and to whom he refers in the closing salutation in the letter from Rome to the Christians in Philippi, have been found among the inscriptions of the Columbaria and other burial places in the neighbourhood. Of course it is impossible to prove the identity of any. But the cautiously expressed opinions of Bishop Lightfoot have been confirmed by later discoveries which are brought up to date in that magnificent Collection known as " Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum." *

For example, of the twenty-seven names mentioned by St. Paul in his letter to the Romans, twenty-one occur, sometimes frequently, in these inscriptions. A few of them the writer had the privilege of transcribing from the original stones. The others are quoted from the authorities mentioned.

The following selection will be sufficient to illustrate what has been said. The names of Aquila and Prisca, who are associated in Acts xviii. 2, 26 ; Rom. xvi. 3 ; 1 Cor. xvi. 19 ; II Tim. iv. 19, occur also together in several inscriptions of early date. Sanday and Headlam describe the following as " clearly Christian " :—

AQUILIAE PRISCAE IN PACE

Epænetus is also mentioned in several inscriptions. In one† he is described as an Ephesian, and perhaps may be the same person as the one whom St. Paul called " the first fruits of Asia."

* See also valuable Notes in Sanday and Headlam's Commentary on the Romans.

† C.I.L., vi., 17171.

Several inscriptions record the Jewish name Maria (Mary in our English Bible). In one of these (C.I.L. vi. 22223) she is connected with an Ampliatus and an Epaphroditus. The latter name in its abbreviated form also occurs in the Columbaria, where the writer was able to make a copy of the following inscription :

DOMITIAE L FAVSTILLAE
PETRONIO ARISTONIS L
EPAPHRAS

" Epaphras to Domitia Freedwoman of Faustilla (and) to Petronius Freedman of Ariston."

Andronicus is also mentioned several times. An inscription (C.I.L. 5326) records that he has placed the stone in memory of his brother-freedman Hermas (see p. 12). The name Amplias also, which is a contraction of Ampliatus, is found several times in connection with the Imperial household. One describes a person of this name as Patronus, *i.e.* master of a household. The following was copied by the writer in the Columbarium previously mentioned :

AMPLIATVS RESTITVTO FRATRI SVO
FECIT MERENTI

" Ampliatus placed (this) to his brother, Restitutus (who was) worthy." This name occurs also in the neighbouring cemetery of Domitilla, which is distinctly Christian, and it probably represents more than one generation.

Urbanus was an equally common name, and Bishop Lightfoot mentions an inscription A.D. 115, where Urbanus and Ampliatus occur next to each other in a list of imperial freedmen connected

with the mint. The following is from a Columbarian inscription, which, it will be seen, introduces also another Pauline name :

URBANVS LYDES AVG DISPENS IMMVNIS DAT
HERMAE FRATRI ET CILICAE PATRI

" Urban, freedman of the noble Lyde, chief steward (*i.e.* alone responsible), gives to his brother Hermas and to his father Cilica."

Stachys is a Greek name, somewhat rare, but found among members of the Imperial household. Bishop Lightfoot quotes the following :

STACHYS MARCELLAE MEDICVS

In another he is associated with Epaphroditus (C.I.L. 8607). Apelles also occurs as a name belonging to the same household. And a person of that name is mentioned by Horace as a Jew (Sat. i. v. 100).

The phrase " of the household " in its connection with the names Aristobulus and Narcissus (Rom. xvi. 10, 11) is confirmed by evidence from the inscriptions. The former was the grandson of Herod the Great, and with his two brothers Agrippa and Herod was educated in Rome. The brothers became kings ; Aristobulus ended his days in Rome as a private person, but in favour with the court. His slaves would be called " Aristobuliani," the equivalent of the Apostle's description. Bishop Lightfoot notices that this household would naturally be composed of a large number of Jews, and the Gospel would the more easily be introduced to their notice. Moreover it is worthy of notice that after saluting this household, St. Paul singles out one whom he describes as his " kinsman," *i.e.* fellow-countryman, and whose name " Herodion " might naturally be that of one of the slaves of the Herodian family.

Immediately after this the same form of expression is used with reference to "the household of Narcissus." This name is not uncommon in the Inscriptions. It is probably that of a well-known freedman described in the following inscription :

NARCISSVS AVG LIB

(C.I.L. 22875). "Narcissus freedman of Augustus." A man of this name and title was accused of political intrigue and was put to death shortly after the accession of Nero, *i.e.* three or four years before the letter to the Roman Church was written. Another inscription may perhaps refer to another member of the family :

CYDNVS TI GERMANICI SVPRA HORTOS
NARCISSVS FRATRI MERENTI

(C.I.L. 4346). "Cydnus Narcissus, superintendent of the gardens of Tiberius Germanicus, to (in memory of) his well-deserving brother."

Tryphena and Tryphosa are generally supposed to be sisters or near relatives. It was the custom, as Bishop Lightfoot says, to designate members of the same family by derivatives of the same root. In this case the root word is Greek, and gives the idea of that which is soft and dainty, and presents a contrast, possibly intentional, to the Apostle's description "who labour in the Lord." Several inscriptions have been recorded which bear the name of one or the other. The two following were copied from the original stones in the Columbaria on the Appian Way, to which reference has been

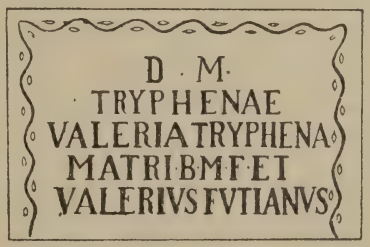

Fig. 6.

made: "To the Divine Spirits. Valeria Tryphena and Valerius Futianus have made (this) for (their) well-deserving mother Tryphena" (Fig. 6). A neighbouring inscription indicates the direct connection with the Imperial household, where Valerius and Valeria are associated with Claudius and Claudia. Lightfoot also gives inscriptions where another Valeria Tryphena and a Claudia Tryphena appear. The name of Tryphosa occurs more frequently. Not far from the inscription of Tryphena, the writer had the pleasure of recording the following (Fig. 7): "Varia Tryphosa Patrona and M. Eppius Clemens have placed this to his well-deserving wife Varia Prima, who lived thirty years." By the title given her here, Tryphosa appears to have been the head of the house, and takes precedence of the husband who had married a wife from the house of which the other Varia was patrona. In another inscription (C.I.L. 207125), where only the two words IVLIAE TRYPHOSA occur, some connection with the Imperial house may be suggested.

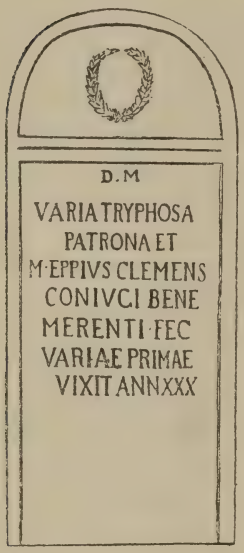

FIG. 7.

The name Persis is rare: the writer has only been able to discover one reference to it in the C.I.L. (vi. 23959), where after invoking the divine spirits, a bereaved husband places an inscription to his wife Persis, and describes her as a freedwoman. Asyncritus, also a Greek name, occurs in an inscription which describes him as a freedman of Augustus, and also "patronus" (C.I.L. vi. 12565).

Hermes is a common slave name in the inscriptions, so also is Hermas, though less frequent, the latter being a contraction of Hermagorus or Hermogenes (see p. 9).

Philologus, too, represents the same class, and is mentioned in several inscriptions. He is generally supposed to be the brother or husband of Julia, whose name was naturally one of the commonest in Rome. If the latter conjecture is right, Nereus and his sister and Olympas were their children. The following inscription may be connected with them :

JULI NEREI F CLAVDIAE

(C.I.L. 20416). Another Julia, who was also Tryphosa, occurs in what is probably a Christian inscription. At the close of his note on the household of Cæsar, Bishop Lightfoot sums up the evidence with characteristic caution. While deprecating any rash conclusions as to the identity of the names occurring in the inscriptions with those recorded in the New Testament, he says :

" But a combination, such as Philologus and Julia, affords more solid ground for inference ; and in other cases, as in the household of Narcissus, the probable circumstances suggest a connection with the palace. If so, an explanation has been found of the reference to members of Cæsar's household in the Philippian letter. At all events, the investigation will not have been useless, if it has shown that the names and allusions at the close of the Roman Epistle are in keeping with the circumstances of the metropolis in St. Paul's day ; for thus it will have supplied an answer to two forms of objection ; the one denying the genuineness of the last two chapters of this letter, and the other allowing their genuineness, but detaching the salutations from the rest and assigning them to another Epistle " (" Ep. to the Philippians," p. 175).

CHAPTER III

THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

HOW far the knowledge of Christianity among its earliest followers in Italy was communicated by oral teaching or by sacred writings, it is not easy to decide. There is abundant evidence, however, from the inscriptions, sculptures and frescoes in the Catacombs, that the Christians were familiar both with the facts and doctrines recorded not only in the Old Testament but in the writings of inspired Apostles. For example, reference to such subjects as the following are frequent: The creation of Eve. The fall of Adam and Eve. Noah in an attitude of prayer, and the returning dove. Moses removing his shoes at the command of God. The sacrifice of Isaac. The giving of the law. The smitten rock and flowing water. The rapture of Elijah. The panting hart. The three Hebrews in the furnace, Daniel in the den of lions, and Jonah's rescue. Allusions to the New Testament are even more frequent. The Annunciation; the Nativity representing the infant Christ in the manger with ox and ass beside Him. The adoration of the Maji. His baptism. His works of mercy, such as turning water into wine, giving sight to the blind, healing the paralytic, and the woman with the issue of blood. The raising of Lazarus. The incidents of the closing days. His entry into Jerusalem, Peter's denial, the Last Supper, the crown of thorns and the judgment hall, and His Judgment at the last day.

It is worthy of note that no representation of our Lord on

the cross, such as became frequent in later ecclesiastical art, has been found in early Christian burial places, so far as the author knows, before the 6th century. Even the emblem of the empty cross is very rare, and does not appear till after the 3rd century. Its awful reality was too recent to make it what it has become to many in modern times, an object of worship, or even an ornament. References to the Lord's own resurrection are rare, but several tombs bear the figure of our Lord raising Lazarus from the dead, such as one in the Lateran Gallery (Fig. 8). It may be noted here that several characteristic words in the New Testament are found not infrequently in some of the early inscriptions. Our Lord's beautiful word for rest used in St. Matt. xi. 28, 29, and St. Peter's phrase "times of refreshing" have evidently been remembered by many a sad heart. One striking inscription, written perhaps by the man himself, vividly describes the pilgrim life of which St. Peter speaks in his first Epistle (ii. 11). It is almost impossible to express in English the graceful Greek, but the idea given by the inscription is that of a traveller passing from a guest house to a permanent home (Fig. 9). "I Callistus

Fig. 8.

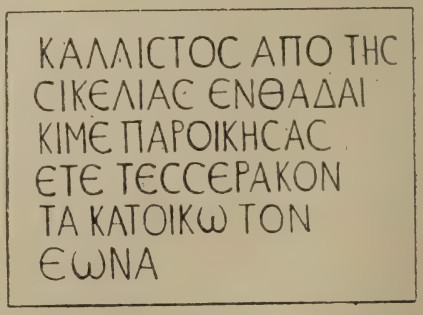

Fig. 9.

from Sicily lie here; having sojourned forty years (on earth) I dwell in eternity."* Two other phrases may be mentioned. They are St. Paul's favourite description of himself, "the slave" of Christ; and his frequent counsel "walk worthy" of the Lord.

In whatever way, however, the knowledge was conveyed, there is definiteness and sincerity in the words and symbols by which the early Christians expressed their faith and hope when they laid their loved ones to rest. The pagan father blames the "angry gods" who had doomed his babe to "eternal sleep." The Christian wrote over the tomb of his child "He rests in peace," "She is with God." It was a simple faith in God Who is "Love," and undisturbed by controversies such as those which rent Christianity in later years, but simple as it was, it roused the fury of polytheistic Rome, which shouted "The Christians to the Lions." Rome cared not how many gods were worshipped provided that Cæsar stood first. If the Christians would not yield they must die. And many inscriptions along the underground galleries still bear witness to the loyalty of their undying faith in the One God manifest in Christ.

It is only possible here to offer a few examples out of a vast number, which may still be seen in the Catacombs or the public galleries and museums to which they have been removed for safe keeping. For simplicity in faith and hope, the following is impressive. It was copied by the writer from an inscription in the Catacomb of Domitilla, and runs thus:

SOLUS DEVS ANIMAM TVAM DEFENDAD ALEXANDRA

"The only God protect thy spirit Alexandra."

Such was the witness of the Christians in the most polytheistic city in the world.

* Quoted by Marucchi from the Cemeterium Majus on the Via Nomentana.

Others from the Cemetery of Priscilla are described by Aringhi. One of these speaks of God as "The Father of all whom Thou hast made," and ends with the words, "To Thee be glory in Christ" (Fig 10).

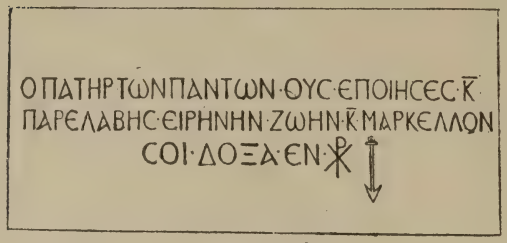

Fig. 10.

Another, in Greek, is in memory of "Sweetest Hermione." Her parents, who have inscribed it, give her age as only 20 days, and speak of her as "In the Divine Kingdom of Jesus Christ" (Fig. 11).

Both in this inscription and others it will be seen that the sacred Name is abbreviated by the use of its first two letters. Sometimes it is expressed by the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, as by the Lord Himself, and recorded four times by His beloved disciple in the Apocalypse (Rev. i. 8, 11; xxi. 6; xxii. 13). Another, rich in suggestion, is given by Maitland from the Vatican Library, "To God the Greatest in Christ. Vitalis buried on Saturday the Kalends of August; who lived 25 years 8 months. With her husband 10 years 30 days. Christ the first and the last." Two other emblems of the Lord are frequent. One, which He had himself given, of the Good Shepherd, sometimes bearing, always tending His sheep. There is a fine Alto-relievo of this in the Catacomb of Domitilla, and a smaller inscription

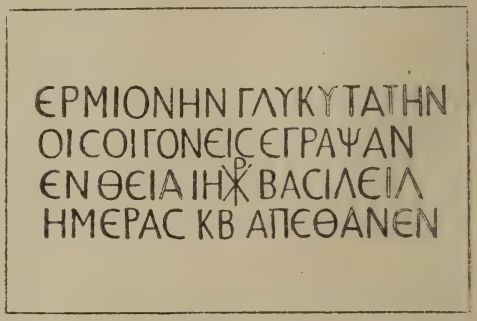

Fig. 11.

in the Lateran Gallery. It may be noted in the first that a goat as well as a sheep is under the Shepherd's care (Fig. 12). The second seems to have been placed by a bereaved husband, perhaps a Christian Jew,. to his wife and child. She is in an attitude of prayer, the Good Shepherd is watching the lamb. The inscription runs thus: "Moses in his lifetime made this for himself and his wife" (Fig. 13).

Fig. 12.

The same sacred Name is shown in a remarkable inscription, probably of the 3rd century. Here the Good Shepherd is bearing the lamb. It begins with the words: "To the one Holy God, Christ"; the symbol of the first two letters is given three times, and there is added another which is not infrequent in the older tombs (Fig. 14). The figure is that of a fish, and the explanation which has come to us from early times, and is now generally received, is as follows: The Greek word for fish is one of five letters, each being in their order the first letter of the words in a sentence, which translated into English is "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour" (Fig. 15). This condensed creed became a token familiar to the Christian, but giving no

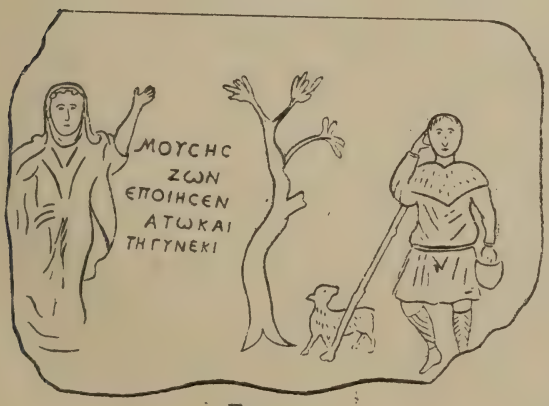

Fig. 13.

provocation to the Pagan, who did not understand its significance.

Another early inscription combines, as will be seen, two of these hieroglyphics; it reads "TASARIS (is in) CHRIST THE FIRST AND THE LAST" (Fig. 16).

FIG. 14.

References to the Third Person of the Trinity are less common, but the following is a definite recognition of Him. It is in the National Museum at Rome, and is mentioned by both Aringhi and Dean Burgon. It is in strong Greek letters, and may be translated as follows: "Protus in (the) Holy Spirit of God lies here. Firmilla (placed this) in remembrance" (Fig. 17). The emblem of a dove, with or without a chalice or vase, is very frequent, but the writer is inclined to think that the former is not a symbol of the Holy Spirit, but rather of peace. It is often duplicated. The vessel which it sometimes bears, or is beside it, some think represents the water of life or the sacramental cup, but evidence for either is doubtful.

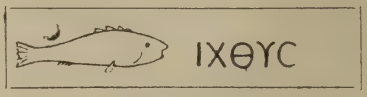

FIG. 15.

IHCOYC JESUS
XPICTOC CHRIST
ΘEOY GOD'S
YIOC SON
CWTHP SAVIOUR

Not only are the Persons of the Holy Trinity mentioned separately, as we have seen, but the inscriptions give evidence of faith in the Unity of the Father and the

Son and the Holy Spirit. Thus a stone found in the cemetery of Priscilla, and figured by Aringhi,* which had been placed in memory of her husband by Victorina, bears both the palm

Fig. 16.

branch of martyrdom and the two sacred symbols of Christ enclosed in a triangle of equal sides.

Another, probably belonging to a later date, is as follows :

QUINTILIANVS HOMO DEI CONFIRMANS TRINITATEM AMANS CASTITATEM RESPVENS MVNDVM

" Quintilianus, a man of God, holding fast the doctrine of the Trinity, loving chastity, rejecting the world." Elsewhere similar evidence has been found in such formulæ as the following :—

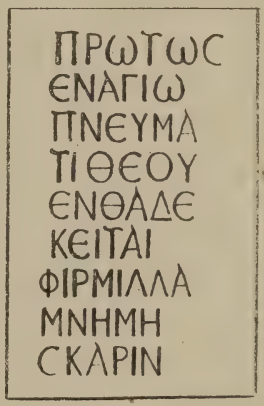

Fig. 17.

IN NOMINE SANCTÆ TRINITATIS
" In the name of the Holy Trinity."

PATRIS ET FILII SPIRITUS SANCTI
" Of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."†

* Roma Subterranea, Lib. iii. p. 341. † Withrow, p. 451.

CHAPTER IV

CHRISTIAN LIFE

THAT the faith described in the previous chapter bore fruit in the lives and hopes of the Christians in Rome, the Catacombs give abundant evidence. Sometimes, as in every age, the language about the loved ones laid to rest may seem exaggerated, but for the most part it is restrained and reverent, and, though often only expressed by a word or two, comes to the reader with a sense of reality. The following may serve as a few instances out of many: "A most faithful maiden," "A spotless soul," "Our sweet Mother," "She died in peace —a dove without bitterness," "A lover of all, an enemy of none," "A handmaid of God who sleeps in peace," "Of wondrous innocence and of the old faith" (this in the 4th century), "Laurentius (the) father to (his) sweetest son Severus, well-deserving, who lived four years, eight months, five days, borne away by the angels."

FIG. 18.

Sometimes, and usually in the case of the young, a figure with hands uplifted in prayer shows how early the practice and habit had been learned* (Fig. 18).

Fig. 19.

"Bellicia. A most faithful maiden in peace on the 14th of the coming Kalends of September who lived 18 years." "Titus. Who lived two years and seven months; he died the 8th before the Kalends of May. In peace" (Fig. 19). The following is interesting as recalling the language of St. Paul: "Septimus Prætextatus of Cilicia, a servant of God, having lived worthily. I do not repent that I have served Thee here, and I shall give thanks to Thy Name"† (Fig. 20).

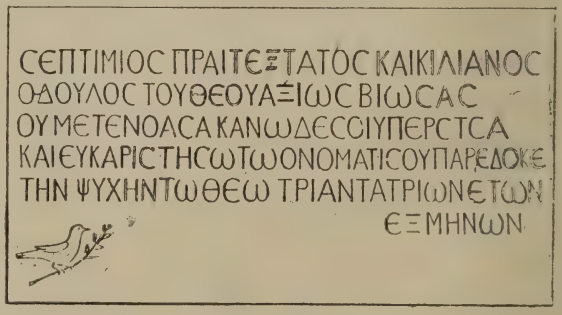

Fig. 20.

What strong yet simple faith is expressed in the following, quoted by Aringhi from the cemetery of Cyriaca:‡ "Thy body to the ground, thy soul to Christ, thou gavest Petronius. For righteous minds are cherished in light celestial, they dwell in heavenly places and are happy in that world. Do thou, sweet son, from thence remember and behold us."

* Cp. I Kings viii. 54, Ps. xxviii. 2, lxiii. 4, cxxxiv. 2, Neh. viii. 6, 1 Tim. ii. 8.

† From the Cemetery of Callistus. Marucchi, p. 150.

‡ Roma Subterranea, iv.-xvi. 54.

Still more frequent and as sincere are such brief expressions of confident hope as " in Peace," " in God," " in the Lord Jesus." The following are characteristic: " Athenodorus my son, thy spirit (has entered) into Rest" (Fig. 21). The last word is the one used by our Lord in His promise to the burdened heart, and referred to in Chapter III.

Fig. 21.

The following are further illustrations of their simple and strong faith :—

DOMITI IN PACE LEA FECIT

" (The tomb) of Domitius (he is) in peace. Lea placed (this)."

GEMELLA DORMIT IN PACE

" Gemella sleeps in peace."

SUSANNA VIVAS IN DEO

" Susanna mayest thou live in God."

AGAPE VIBES IN ETERNVM

" Agape thou shalt live for ever."

FILICIA IN PACE IN FIDE DEI
QVI VIXIT ANIS XXXIII

" Felicia is in peace in the faith of God, who lived 33 years."

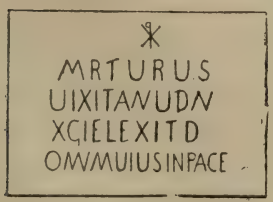

Fig. 22.

The next has special interest for several reasons. It is given by Maitland,* as preserved in the Lapidarian Gallery of the Vatican. It is also noted by Withrow,† who copies Maitland's translation. The original is as shown in Fig. 22. The sculptor

* P. 73. † P. 66.

who inscribed the stone either was illiterate or followed an inaccurate draft. The emblem of our Lord at the head is reversed, letters on the first line have been omitted, others are irregular. In the second line the ninth and tenth letters are out of place, and both Marriott and Withrow have probably been misled in their translation. They have supposed that the two misplaced letters V.D. inserted in the abbreviated ANN (years) to be meant for P.M. (more or less), which often occurs in such inscriptions where the age of the person is uncertain. It is a reasonable suggestion that they stand, as they do still, for Deo Volente (God Willing), but refer rather to the past than, as in our frequent use, to the future. The inscription thus interpreted will read as follows: "In Christ, Martyrius lived ninety-one years by the will of God. He chose a home during his lifetime. In peace." The thought of the after-life for these Christians was more than that of unconscious sleep. As noted in the last chapter, the Apostolic word "refreshment" is frequent, and the consciousness of the dead assumed. The following are examples:—

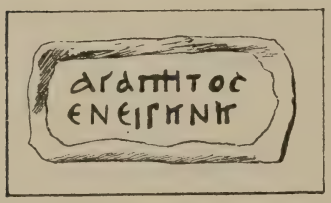

Fig. 23.

"God shall refresh thy spirit," "Kalamere, God shall refresh thy spirit with that of thy sister Hilara," "Nicephorus, his sweet soul is in refreshment," "Amerimnus to his dearest wife Rufina, well-deserving. God shall refresh thy spirit."

The consciousness that death does not break the sacred communion with those who have died in the Lord, and with whom believers will be united at His coming, appears in such inscriptions as the following: "Gentianus, a believer, is in peace, who lived 21 years 8 months 16 days. And in thy prayers ask for us, for we know that thou art in Christ."

The following, probably of very early date, is exquisite in its simplicity. The first word may be a proper name or a term of endearment: "Agapetos. In peace" (Fig. 23).

"Dionysius a blameless babe lies here with the saints. Remember us also in your holy prayers." This inscription is in large Greek letters. Below has been added in smaller characters: "Yea the sculptor and the writer also" (Fig. 24).

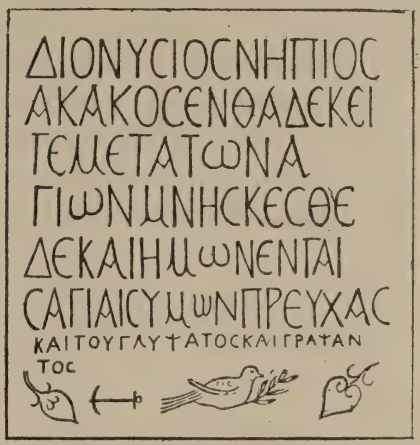

Fig. 24.

"Anatolius made this for his well-deserving son who lived 7 years 7 months 20 days. May thy spirit rest well in God. Ask for thy sister" (Fig. 25). It is hardly necessary to remind the reader that such pious wishes are very different from the developments which grew up in later and decadent Christianity, and that the doctrine of purgatory or prayers to the Virgin and the Saints, encouraged by the Church of Rome, was wholly unknown to the Early Church.

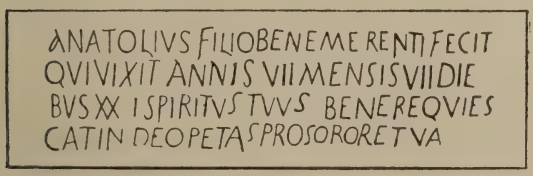
ANATOLIVS FILIOBENEMERENTI FECIT
QVIVIXIT ANNIS VII MENSIS VII DIE
BVS XX I SPIRITVS TVVS BENEREQVIES
CATIN DEO PETAS PROSORORE TVA

Fig. 25.

Thus, the outlook on the after-life gave not only the hope of rest and freedom from the burdens and anxieties of earth, but the expectation of a conscious communion with the Lord, and the realization of a life which St. Paul has described in words that have been of the deepest comfort to countless souls from that day to this: "Very far better" (Phil. i. 23 R.V.). There is a beautiful stone in the Lateran Gallery which in letters only records the

name of a lady aged 65 (Fig. 26), but in a picture parable below them suggests what many words would fail to express. A ship coming out from a stormy sea is rounding the lighthouse to take shelter and be refitted in the harbour. The same figure is used by an Evangelical writer of the 18th century, too little known by readers of the 20th. James Hervey, in a series of letters to a lady friend, which were printed under the title *Meditations Among the Tombs*, concludes the last with a description of the Christian Hope, which could not have been more graphic if the Roman picture had been before him.

Fig .26.

"The righteous must lie in the bosom of the earth, as a wary pilot in some well-sheltered creek, till all the storms, which infest this lower world, are blown over. Here they enjoy safe anchorage, are in no danger of foundering amidst the waves of prevailing iniquity, or of being ship-wrecked on the rocks of any powerful temptation. But ere long we shall behold them hoisting their flag of hope; riding before a sweet gale of atoning merit and redeeming love; till they make, with all the sails of an assured faith, the blessed port of eternal life. Then may the honoured friend to whom I am writing, rich in good works, rich in heavenly tempers, but inexpressibly richer in her Saviour's righteousness, O! May she enter the harbour, like a gallant stately vessel, returned successful and victorious from some grand expedition, with acclamations, honour and joy! While my little barque, attendant on the solemnity, and a partaker of the triumph, glides humbly after; and both rest together in the haven—the wished-for, blissful haven, of perfect security, and everlasting repose."

In painful contrast to the peaceful and hopeful spirit expressed in Christian inscriptions are many placed over the heathen dead. Withrow gives such instances as the following, preserved in the Lapidarian and other galleries in Rome. Though many others of the same class are expressed in more patient and affectionate terms, none bears a trace of the hope and happiness that is the constant feature of the Christians who laid down their dead to rest in expectation of a joyful resurrection and reunion.

VICTA EST IVSTICIA NON AEQVO IVDICE FATO
"Justice is overcome by the Unjust Judge Fate."

DECIPIMVR VOTIS ET TEMPORE FALLIMVR ET MORS DERIDET CVRAS ANXIA VITA NIHIL
"We are deceived by our vows, misled by time, and death derides our cares; anxious life is naught."

INFANTI DVLCISSIMO QVEM DII IRATI AETERNO SOMNO DEDERVNT
"To a sweetest babe whom angry gods committed to eternal sleep."

OVOD EDI ET BIBI MECVM HABEO QVOD RELIQUI PERDIDI
"What I eat and drank I have with me, what I left I have lost."

ANIMAL INGRATIVS HOMINE NVLLM EST
"No animal is more ungrateful than man."

VIXI DVM VIXI BENE IAM MEA PERACTA MOX VESTRA AGETVR FABVLA VALETE ET PLAVDITE
"I lived while I lived, well. Now my story is finished, soon yours will be acted. Farewell and applaud."

CHAPTER V

CHRISTIAN MARTYRS

THE prolonged story of suffering and slaughter which Christian Martyrology presents in the three centuries after the death of our Lord and His Apostles, lies beyond the purpose of the present work, which is rather to collect and state facts on the testimony of the early Christians themselves (and especially from the inscriptions) which will furnish authentic evidence and supply materials for the broader picture. We trust also that they may furnish consolation for mourners to-day, and provoke to a fuller consecration those who forget that the Lord's repeated call to bear the cross and follow Him is as binding on Christians to-day as it was when He gave it.*

It is not surprising that genuine inscriptions on the tombs of Martyrs are few. Among the earliest after the Apostolic age to confess Christ by death was Ignatius, who was cast to the wild beasts in the Coliseum, A.D. 107. No inscription to his memory remains, but various writings by him have been preserved, which are usually accepted as genuine.

The following inscription, which refers to another Martyr, may be probably of the date A.D. 130.† Translated it is as follows: "In the time of the Emperor Adrian, Marius, a young military officer, who had lived long enough, when he died for Christ with

* St. Matt. x. 38, xvi. 24.

† Maitland, p. 127.

blood. In peace at length he rested. The well-deserving placed this with tears and fears. On the 6th before the ides."

A Martyr's palm-branch has been inscribed on one side, the sacred symbol of the first two letters of Christ on the other, "Well-deserving." This term, frequently applied to the dead and not the living, is probably a conventional way of describing what we should call religious.

Another early inscription is given by Maitland,* but without date. It is as follows :—

"In Christ. Alexander is not dead, but lives above the stars and his body rests in the tomb. He ended his life under the Emperor Antonine, who, foreseeing that great benefit would result from his services, returned evil for good. For while on his knees, and about to worship the true God, he was led away to execution. O sad times! in which among sacred rites and prayers even in caverns we are not safe. What can be more wretched than such a life? but what than such a death? When they cannot be buried by parents and friends. At length they shine with brilliance in heaven. He has hardly lived who lived in the times of Christ." The last five words are so rendered by Maitland, and are the best that can be suggested for somewhat ambiguous writing. A Martyr's palm-branch and a lighted brazier accompany this inscription.

Withrow gives other inscriptions which were written by Damasus, who was Bishop of Rome from 366–384. They are in Latin hexameters, and lack the simplicity which is conspicuous in others where grief was too real for elaborate poetry. The cases are very few where they have been found as inscriptions :—

"The truth-speaking ruler, because he preached that the lapsed should weep for their crimes, was bitterly hated by all those unhappy ones. Hence fury, hence hatred followed, discord, contentions, sedition and slaughter; and the bonds of peace

* Maitland, p. 39.

were ruptured. For the crime of another, who in a time of peace had denied Christ, he was expelled the shores of his country by the cruelty of the tyrant. These things Damasus having learned, was desirous to relate briefly, that the people might recognise the merit of Marcellus."

The next was discovered by Rossi in a fragmentary condition in the tomb of the Bishop, but it has been interpreted as follows : " Heraclius forbade the lapsed to grieve for their sins. Eusebius taught those unhappy ones to weep for their crimes. The people were rent in parties, and with increasing fury began sedition and slaughter, fighting, discord and strife. Straightway both were banished by the cruelty of the tyrant, though the ruler was preserving the bonds of peace inviolate. He bore his exile with joy, looking to the Lord as his judge, and on the shore of Sicily gave up the world and his life."*

Another quotation from the pen of Damasus is in memory of Adauctus, a treasurer of the Imperial palace. The following lines are sufficient to describe a noble character :—

" With unfaltering faith, despising the lord of the world, having confessed Christ, thou didst seek the celestial realms."

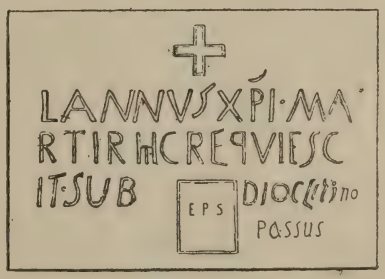

FIG. 27.

The three following inscriptions have each special features of interest. They are all probably about the same date, which is indicated in the first. This translated reads thus (Fig. 27) : " Lannus, Christ's Martyr, rests here, having suffered under Diocletian." The small letters in the inset stand for " Et posteris suis," and imply that the tomb in which he was laid belonged to his family, and others might be placed there.

* Withrow, p. 94.

There were two persecutions in the reign of Diocletian, one at the end of the third century, and the other at the beginning of the fourth.

Aringhi gives inscriptions from columns said to have been found in Spain, in both of which the name of the Roman Emperor is connected with a premature boast of the overthrow and extinction of Christianity, on which Dr. Maitland makes a characteristic comment: *"We have here a memorial raised by paganism over the grave of its vanquished foe. But in this the people imagined a vain thing. So far from being deceased, Christianity was on the eve of final and permanent triumph, and the stone guarded a sepulchre empty as the urn which Electra washed with her tears. Neither in Spain nor elsewhere can be pointed out the burial place of Christianity. It is not; for the living have no tomb." The next inscription is also given by Aringhi and probably is about the same date (Fig. 28):

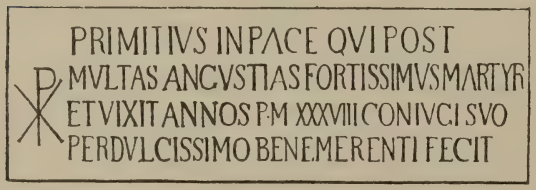
PRIMITIVS IN PACE QVI POST
MVLTAS ANCVSTIAS FORTISSIMVS MARTYR
ET VIXIT ANNOS P M XXXVIII CONIVGI SVO
PERDVLCISSIMO BENEMERENTI FECIT

FIG. 28.

"Primitius is in peace, who after many tortures was a most valiant Martyr. He lived 38 years, more or less. To her very dearest husband well-deserving . . . has placed this."

The poor widow's words seem to fail in conveying the intensity of her grief. We note the superlative which expresses his sufferings, and the hyper-superlative of her affection, and yet she withholds her own name, as though it was unworthy to be read alongside his. And with all this there is a curious caution. She will make no mistake about his age, and she adds the two letters which may be seen even to-day in the correspondence of very careful people. To the same explorer we are indebted for the discovery of another most

* P. 132.

interesting inscription, in some respects unique. It is in barbarous Greek character of which no other specimen has been discovered (Fig. 29). Translated, it is as follows: "Here lies Gordianus, deputy of Gaul, who was executed for the faith with all his family. They are in peace. Theophila, a handmaid, placed this." Why Gordianus, sent to Gaul as a legate, should bring back a maid-servant who used barbarous Greek characters to express Latin words was a perplexing problem till explained in the manner which Dr. Maitland has described. We cannot do better than give it in his own words:—*

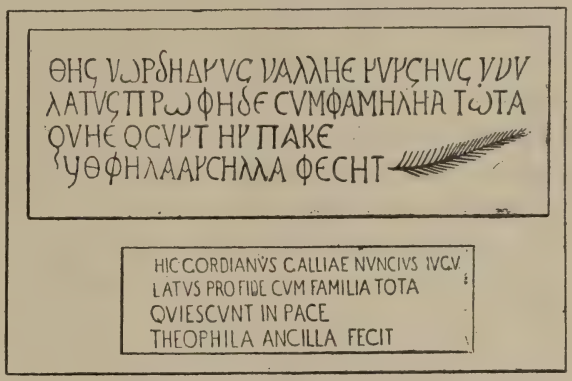

FIG. 29.

"About thirty years after the time of Aringhi, Mabillon drew attention to an observation made by Julius Cæsar, that the Gallic Druids were accustomed to use Greek letters in their secular transactions, and that they had the management of the education of youth.† This accounts for Theophila's Greek, some letters of which can scarcely be admitted within the pale of the standard alphabet. She afterwards learns Latin, but only by ear; this ill-assorted learning does not enable her both to write and speak any one language. Were it sufficient for her to dictate the epitaph, this would create no difficulty; but the stone-cutter to whom she entrusts its execution is probably ignorant of letters, and must have an exact copy of the inscription laid before him. Theophila has one resource, to

* Pp. 134-6.

† De Bello Gallico, lib. vi.

express Latin words in Druidical Greek letters ; in this way she contrives to record the martyrdom of her master. We are here met by a difficulty ; we have made out, upon the strength of an obscure inscription, the story of a Roman Legate, a man high in office, martyred for the faith. We have placed the incident in Rome, and fixed upon the catacomb as his burial place ; we have given him a household, and in particular, a faithful Christian handmaid, who raises a monument to his memory. But does history contain no notice of so remarkable an occurrence ? Aringhi, who discovered the epitaph, knew of none ; and so strongly did he feel the want of some historical confirmation of his interpretation, that he endeavoured to explain the words ' Galliæ Nuncius ' as ' ecclesiastical nuncio from Gaul.' About ninety years before Aringhi wrote, Surius published a manuscript entitled ' The Martyrdom of St. Gordianus.' In this tract is described the conversion of a Roman nobleman named Gordianus through the preaching of Januarius the presbyter, who suffered in the time of Julian : also the baptism of Gordianus and his wife Marina, together with a large part of his household, amounting to fifty-three persons. Gordianus was martyred, and his body exposed before the temple of Minerva, from which indignity it was soon rescued by one of the household, who buried it in the Catacombs on the Latin way. A coincidence more complete can scarcely be desired : the passage in Cæsar's Commentaries not brought to bear upon the subject till 1680 ; the epitaph itself first discovered and interpreted in 1650 ; and the martyrology of Surius published in 1560, and not quoted in illustration of the epitaph by either Mabillon or Aringhi, compose a strong body of evidence ; and when we consider that this evidence is now brought together in its entire form, perhaps for the first time, the impossibility of any collusion between the witnesses will be obvious."

In the same catacomb from whence this inscription reported by Aringhi was taken, that of Sta. Agnese on the Via Nomentana, the writer copied the following which he has not noted elsewhere: "To my sweetest daughter, Victoria in Peace." It is suggested that the final letter of the second line stands for "Martyr" (Fig. 30).

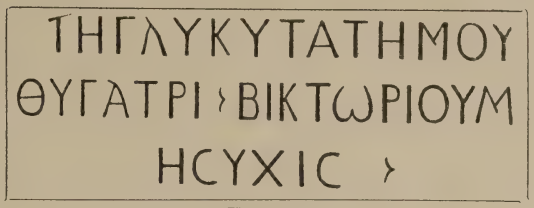

Fig. 30.

CHAPTER VI

CHURCH ORDER

THE evidence on this subject which has been found among the inscriptions in Roman Catacombs, while sufficient to furnish a good idea of the Christian Ministry in the first three or four centuries, is silent as to some historic questions which have been the subject of controversy for many centuries. Traditions abound. The Catacombs tell us nothing, for example, about the first Bishop of Rome. The following inscription (Fig. 31), copied by the writer in the Lateran Gallery, is interesting, mainly that the heads of two Apostles have been carved on it, though the inscription refers to a boy of seven. The following are the only inscribed records of Bishops which, after careful search, the writer has been able to find. Fabian (236–250 A.D.), Cornelius (250–252 A.D.), both of these were Martyrs; Eutychianus (A.D. 275), and another mentioned by Maitland,* who was probably Siricius, the date of the consulate given in the inscription being 392 A.D.

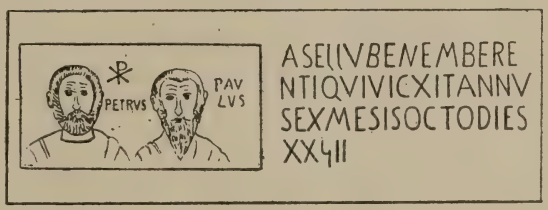

FIG. 31.

* P. 229.

The inscription, copied from the Lapidarian Gallery, is as follows :—

PERPETVAM SEDEM NVTRITOR POSSIDES IPSE
HIC MERITVS FINEM MAGNIS DEFVNCTE PERICLIS
HIC REQVIEM FELIX SVMIS COGENTIBVS ANNIS
HIC POSITVS PAPA SANTIMIOO VIXIT ANNIS LXX
DEPOSITVS DOMINO NOSTRO ARCADIO II ET FL
RVFINO
VVCCSS NONAS NOBEMB

Maitland's translation runs thus : " You, our nursing father, occupy a perpetual seat, here deserving an end, having passed through great dangers. Here happy, you find rest, bowed down with years. Here lies the most holy Pope, who lived 70 years. Buried on the Nones of November, our Lords Arcadius (for the second time) and Flavius Rufinus being Consuls." This effusion is in striking contrast to the simplicity of the tombs of earlier Bishops, such as these two from the Cemetery of Callistus (Fig. 32).

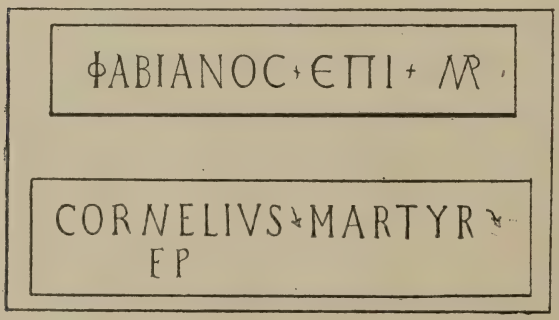

Fig. 32.

The word Papa, however, had not then the exclusive sense which was given it in later days, and is now assumed by the Pope of Rome. Other Bishops used it also in its natural meaning " father." The name of Presbyter, as well as those of Bishop and Deacon are Greek, and show their Eastern origin. The first carries no sacerdotal sense, but is strictly a

term signifying seniority, as "alderman" does in civil life. The following are examples in the Lateran Gallery :—

LOCUS PRESBYTER BASILI TITULI SABINAE
"The grave of the Presbyter Basil of the title of Sabina."

HIC QUIESCIT ROMANUS PBB. QVI
SEDIT PBB. ANN. XXVIII MX

"Here reposes Romanus a Presbyter who sat as Presbyter twenty-eight years ten months."

LOCUS ROMVLI PRESBYTERI TITULI PUDENTIANAE
"The grave of Romulus Presbyter of the title of Pudentiana."

The term "title," used in two of the foregoing, probably refers to the name of some chapel or room (perhaps in or near a catacomb) ; in later times to a church named after some honoured person, as is still the custom. A well-known church in Rome bears the name of Sta. Pudentiana, an eminent Christian lady. A stone bearing an inscription, and probably taken from a catacomb, has been fixed in the north wall. By the courtesy of the church verger, the writer was allowed to take a rubbing of the inscription which he believes has not been previously published. "To Cornelia Pudens (daughter) of Anetus well-deserving . . . Petronius

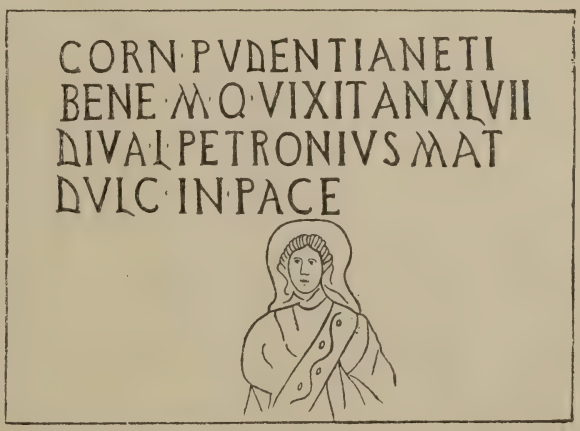

FIG. 33.

(placed this), in peace to his sweet Mother" (Fig. 33). It is interesting that the word "title" still survives as an ecclesiastical term in the Church of England. A bishop in most cases drops his own name and adopts the title of his diocese. A vicar before appointment to a parish, though he does not change his name, receives an authority from the bishop to officiate, which is called a title.

It will have been noted that no rule of celibacy bound the clergy in the early Church of Rome. This is shown in the following touching words :—

OLIM PRESBYTERI GABINI FILIA FELIX HIC SVSANNA
JACET IN PACE PATRI SOCIATA

"Once the happy daughter of the Presbyter Gabinus, here will Susanna lie in peace joined with her father."

LOCVS BASILI PRESB ET FELICITATI EIVS
SIBI FECERVNT

"The tomb of Basil, presbyter, and his Felicitas. They made it for themselves."

Sometimes a presbyter added to his sacred office a secular profession. Withrow* mentions one who was also a silversmith, and a noble stone in the Lateran Gallery bears three words in great Greek letters (Fig. 34):

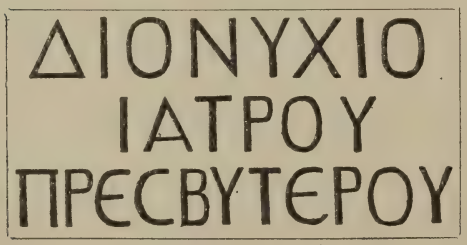

Fig. 34.

Dionysius, Physician
Presbyter.

The next office in the clerical

* P. 513.

order was that of the deacon. The inscriptions are generally very brief, as :—

IVL DIACONVS DEPS FELIX DIAC
LOCVS EXVPERANTI DIACON

A beautiful inscription is given by Maitland,* which interpreted is as follows :—

" Petronia, a deacon's wife, the type of modesty. In this place I lay my bones ; spare your tears, dear husband and daughters, and believe that it is forbidden to weep, for one who lives in God. Buried in peace, on the third before the Nones of October, in the consulate of Festus " (*i.e.* in A.D. 472).

Next in the order of the Ministry came the reader and the exorcist. Instances of each are given. The first was copied by the writer from a stone in the lowest gallery of the Catacomb of Sta. Agnese, and has, he believes, not been previously noted. It is as follows :—

FAVOR FAVOR LECTOR

This may be read : " Favorinus, son of Favorinus, Reader."

The next two are given by Maitland :*

CLAVDIVS ATTICIANVS LECTOR
ET CLAVDIA FELICISSIMA COIVX

" Claudius Atticianus a Reader, and Claudia Felicissima his wife."

On a stone which had already been used for a pagan inscription there were added the words :—

JANVARIVS EXORCISTA
SIBI ET CONIVGI FECIT

" Januarius the Exorcist made this for himself and his wife."

* Pp. 249, 250.

The next was copied by the writer in the Lateran Gallery :—

PRIMVS EXORCIST
FECIT

" Primus the Exorcist placed (this)."

Another class of workers must be mentioned, to whom belonged the duty of excavating graves and cutting the underground galleries. They were known as fossors, and seem to have worked together in guilds. And several inscriptions record the sale and purchase of private graves. The following, for example, is more like the record of a commercial transaction than the usual memorial inscription. It is of the 4th century, and was copied by the writer from the original in the Lateran Museum (Fig. 35) : " Constantius and Susanna in their lifetime bought this grave for themselves, all the grave-diggers being present. In Christ. First and Last."

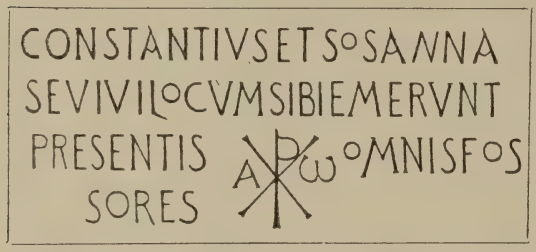

FIG. 35.

The following ill-spelt inscription was copied in the Vatican :—

LOCVS FILVMENI COC
ENET SVIS A FLORENTIN
FOSORE

" The grave of Filuminus . . . Bought (it) for his (children) from Florentius the Grave-digger."

Another inscription given by Maitland* may be translated as follows : " The place bought by Bartemistus, that is a double grave. And the price paid to the grave-digger Hilarus (was)

* P. 70.

the sum of fourteen hundred folles, in the presence of the grave-diggers Severus and Laurentius."

Maitland gives reasons for estimating the amount paid as equivalent to about £1 2*s.* 7*d.* of English money.

Another Church official is mentioned by Dean Burgon, who gives the following inscription now in the National Museum at Rome :—

L. FAVSTIN QVEM COM
PARAVIT AIVLIO
MANSONARIO SVB
CONSCIENTIA PRES
BYTERI MARCIANI

" The place (*i.e.* grave) of Faustinus, which he purchased of Julius the Sacristan, Presbyter Marcianus being privy to the transaction." On this the Dean makes the following remark : " The office Mansonarius may be gathered from the ' Dialogues ' attributed to Gregory the Great. He *resided* in the church of which he was first *the Warden* : but his duties corresponded rather with those of the ' Sacristan ' or, as we should say, of the ' Clerk.' "

That the early Church recognized the ministry of women is well known on the authority of the New Testament. This is fully confirmed by the Catacombs, both as to the elder and younger women. The one mentioned in the following perhaps might come under St. Paul's description : " A widow indeed " :—*

OC TA VI AE MA TRO NAE VI DV AE DEI
" To the matron Octavia, a widow of God."†

Another who had not reached the sixty years required by the Apostle is given by Withrow :—‡

HIC QUIESCIT GAUDIOSA C F ANCILLA DEI QVAE
VIXIT ANNOS XL ET MEN V

* 1 Tim. v. 3. † Maitland, p. 254. ‡ Withrow, p. 528.

" Here rests Gaudiosa C. F. a handmaid of God, who lived forty years and five months." The two letters after her name are honorific, as will be explained in the next chapter.

The following quoted by Maitland* from the Lapidarian Gallery might be described more definitely as Deaconess, such as Phœbe whom St. Paul so designates :—†

AESTONIA VIRGO PEREGRINA
QVE VIXIT ANIS XL I ET DS VIII IIII KAL MAR
DECESSIT DE COMPORE

" Aestonia, a travelling virgin, who lived forty-one years and eight days. She departed from the body on the 4th before the Kalends of March."

The two following also given by Maitland are of the same class :—

AVRELIA AGAPETILLA ANCILLA
DEI QVAE DORMIT IN PACE VIXIT ANN
XXI M III O IIII PATER FECIT

" Aurelia Agapetilla, the handmaid of God : who sleeps in peace. She lived twenty-one years, three months, and four days. Her father set up this."

FURIA HELPIS
VIRGO DEVOTA

" Furia Helpis, a consecrated maiden."

‡Withrow in addition quotes the next :—

IN HOC SEPVLCHRO REQVIESCIT PVELLA VIRGO
SACRA B M ALEXANDRA

" In this tomb is resting a girl, a consecrated maiden, well-deserving. Alexandra."

* Maitland, p. 253. † Rom. xvi. 1. ‡ Withrow, p. 528.

The following, copied by the writer in the Lateran Gallery, contains a word used by St. Paul in 1 Tim. iii. 6, which is found occasionally in the Catacombs, and had probably a more technical sense in post-Apostolic days as implying one recently converted and received into the Church :—

" To Felix (our) well-deserving son ; he lived twenty-three years, ninety days. He passed out of this life unmarried, a neophyte in peace. His parents have placed this. Buried on the 4th before the Nones of August."

Another to a younger neophyte is quoted by Maitland :—*

ROMANO NEOFITO
BENEMERENTI QVI VI
XIT ANNOS VIII DXV
REQVIESCIT IN PACE DN
FL GRATINO AVG II ET
PETRONIO PROBO CS

" To the neophyte Romanus well-deserving, who lived eight years and fifteen days ; he rests in peace. The Lords F. Gratianus Augustus for the second time and Petronius Probus being Consuls."

The date given in the above corresponds to 371 A.D.

* Maitland, p. 279.

CHAPTER VII

SOCIAL LIFE

THE value of any religion may be measured not only by the effects which it produces on individual lives, but in the beneficent results which it produces in the relation of each life to other lives. To " bear one another's burdens "* is a law given by Him Who " pleased not Himself."† It was in obedience to this vital principle of Christianity that the early Church lived through years of terrible persecution, and emerged triumphant from the conflict. Professor Orr in his book, *Neglected Factors in the Study of Early Christianity,* has proved the case, often overlooked, that the Gospel of Christ was not only intensive but extensive in its influence. It struck deep into individual consciences, and showed itself in the personal lives of its followers, but it also reached all classes of society, and even in time to the Imperial Family. This is well illustrated by numerous inscriptions. To begin with the humblest class. A well-cut stone, copied by the writer in the Lapidarian

FIG. 36.

* Gal. vi. 2. † Rom. xv. 3.

Gallery, bears the name of Peter, a house-born slave (that is, his parents had been slaves), and to his name is added the term of more than common affection, "sweetest." The doves on each side, bearing the olive leaf, are symbolic of peace (Fig. 36). A similar testimony to a slave is recorded by Aringhi :—

HIC SITVS NOTATVS SERVVS FIDELISSIMVS
"Here lies Notatus, a most faithful slave."

Another by a mistress named Artonia is even more emphatic. The servant's name is Euporia, and she is described by her "Patrona" as "most straightforward and loyal." The first epithet (Fig. 37) is interesting from its being a familiar word in the New Testament. It is twice used by the Lord, and translated the "single eye"; its kindred noun is mentioned nine times by St. Paul, and rendered "simplicity," "liberality," "sincerity," "bountifulness," "singleness" (this of servants, Eph. vi. 5, and Col. iii. 5), qualities which every mistress to-day can well appreciate.

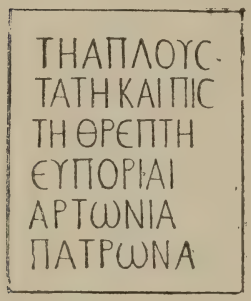

Fig. 37.

Labourers and tradesmen are often represented by the emblems of their occupations, as a carpenter by his plumb and triangle, a mason by his hammer, the grave-digger by spade and pick-axe; a money-changer by a pair of scales, and a corn merchant by a measure, as shown here (Fig. 38). Some writers have regarded this figure as a brazier or

Fig. 38.

some instrument of torture, and claim Victoria as a Martyr. But this is most improbable. The figure is familiar to antiquarians. A bronze vessel exactly similar to that of the inscription in the Lateran Gallery was found a few years ago on the Roman Wall in Northumberland; it was about a foot high; bore the Imperial name of a Cæsar (probably Domitian), and held what would be about eighteen pounds of grain in a modern measure. The *Times* of Sept. 4th, 1915, gives an interesting description of this vessel by Professor Haverfield, with a picture which exactly corresponds with the drawing given here, made by the writer in the Lateran Gallery. The following is from the same source :—

HIC REQVIESCIT IN PACE IOHANNIS V H
OLOGRAFVS PROPINE ISIDORI QVI VIX
ANN PLUS M XLV DEP : X KALEN IVNIA
CONSVLATV VISILARI VS :

" Here rests in peace John, an honest man, wood-painter, of the cook shop of Isidore, who lived forty-five years, more or less. Buried on the 10th before the Kalends of June in the Consulate of the noble Belisarius." The letters V.H. may mean that the person who bore them belonged to a trade guild, though they literally stand for " honest man " (compare our " goodman "). A similar use of other letters will be noted in the cases which are given below. The custom has survived and extended to a great variety of alphabetic designations, though in the present day these represent strictly defined qualifications and honours.

But the more carefully the Catacombs are examined, the more they present conditions which both the New Testament and contemporary writers would lead us to expect. The expansive influence of the Gospel was not limited to one class, nor was it checked by persecution, severe though this often was.

It has been shown in an earlier chapter what a footing the religion of Christ had gained in the huge household of Cæsar. Recent discoveries in the Catacombs by Rossi also suggest the probability that there may be truth in the legend which connects the Pudens and Claudia named in 2 Tim. iv. 21 with a Roman centurion of distinction and a British princess whom he had married.

The following instances belong to a different social grade from those which have been given in this chapter. The first is noted by Aringhi :—

AVR TIGRIS C F AVR FELICIANO V P MARITO
INCOMPARABILI CVM CVI ANNIS XXI
SINE VLLA DISCORDIA BENE MERENTE
CVM DOLORE MEO
ISSCVLPI IVSSI

"Aurelia Tigris C. F, to Aurelius Felicianus V. P. (my) incomparable husband, with whom I lived 21 years without any discord. Well-deserving. In my grief I have ordered this to be inscribed." The honorary letters in the foregoing are not easily translated into English, but they may be interpreted thus : C.F. is short for "Clarissima femina" (a very distinguished lady). V.P. a man of Patrician rank.

The following are given by Marucchi,* the first from the Cemeterium Majus, the other from that of Priscilla :—

LVRIA JANVARIA C F CAELIO FELICISSIMO V E COIVG
KARISS

"Luria Januaria C.F. to Cœlius V.E. her most happy and dear husband." The letters added to the husband's name, probably indicate that he was a man of Equestrian rank.

LICINEIVS MILX PRETORIANVS AVR PRICE COCVVGI
K BENE MERENTI IN PACE COH VI

* P. 344.

Some of the words are doubtful, perhaps on account of the stone-cutter's ignorance, but the following is a probably correct translation :—

" Licineus a soldier of the Pretorian Guard, to Aurelia Prisca, his well-deserving wife, in Peace. The Sixth Cohort." Phil. i. 13 tells us that it was to a guard of this distinguished regiment St. Paul was committed.

CHAPTER VIII

FAMILY LIFE

WE have seen how widely Christianity exercised its influence in the social life of Rome. We may, therefore, note how it affected the intimate conditions of home life. A large number of inscriptions have been found, both Pagan and Christian, in which parents record the death of children, or husbands and wives mourn each other.

The contrast is pathetic, the heathen bitterly complaining of the cruelty of fate, or of angry gods, the other expressing sweet remembrances of the past and assured hope for the future. An example of the former has been quoted in Chapter III. Many others might be given as heartless and as hopeless, such as one quoted by Withrow:* "We are deceived by our vows, misled by time, and death derides our cares: anxious life is naught."

Not so did the Christian lay his loved ones to rest. The following instances referring to the various relationships of family life may serve to show how entirely the Gospel had changed his outlook. They were copied by the writer in the Lapidarian Gallery: "To Justa, my wife,

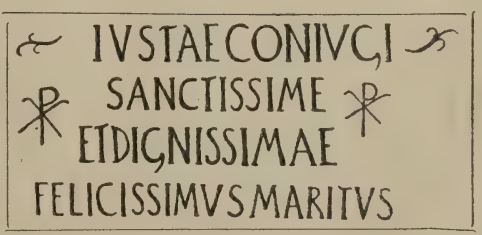

FIG. 39.

* P. 437.

most holy and most worthy; her most happy husband places this" (Fig. 39).

"A birthday offering for Jugatus (my) husband, (he is) in Peace." The scales probably refer to the husband's business as a money-changer (Fig. 40).

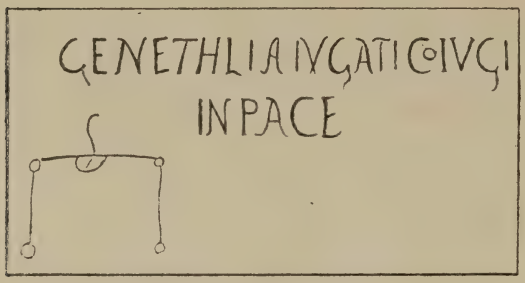

FIG. 40.

"To (his) most revered and sweetest consort, Rodine Aurelius Diociodoros has placed (this)—The Lord be with thee" (Fig. 41).

"Homonoios to Domina his sweetest wife. In love" (Fig. 42).

Dean Burgon in his *Letters from Rome** gives many illustrations of such Christian memorials, and says:

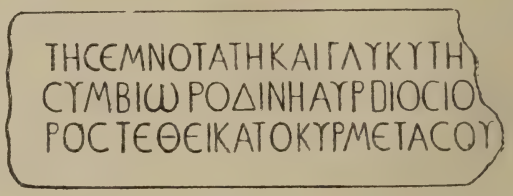

FIG. 41.

"In modern days a notion seems to prevail that in early Christian times there was nothing to be seen written on the grave but words of abasement and humility—a strong cry for mercy—and the like. But it really is not so. The heart speaks the same language in all ages, and its language is love—love which rises to overflowing when the

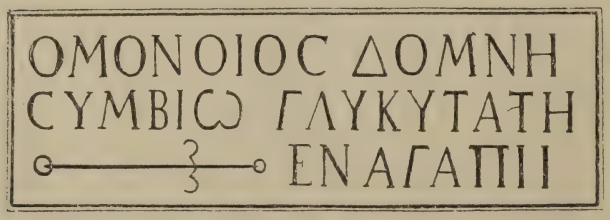

FIG. 42.

* Pp. 197, 198, 205.

barrier of the grave is interposed. Look at this from the Galeria Lapidaria of the Vatican :—

'To Adsertor our dear, sweet, innocent(?) and incomparable son; who lived 17 years, 6 months, 8 days. His father and mother erected it.'" (Fig. 43.)

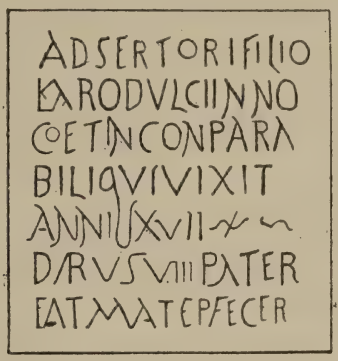

FIG. 43.

Other instances given by the same authority are as follow :—

"In Christ. I, Secunda, made (this) to the good memory of my daughter, Secundina, who departed in faith; with her brother Laurentius. In peace they departed."

"To our good and most sweet daughter Mercuranetis, who lived one year, nine months, fifteen days. Buried on the 12th of the Kalends of January. In peace."

*"Macus, innocent boy, thou hast already begun to be among the innocent. Unto thee how sure is thy present life! Thee how joyous the Church (thy) mother receiveth on thy return from this world. Hushed be (this) bosom's groans! Dried be (these) weeping eyes!"

The following are given by Marucchi :—†

"Paulina mayest thou rest in peace, and may all thy sons have God for their Protector."

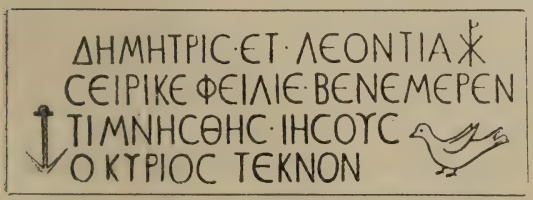

FIG. 44.

"In Christ. Demetrius and Leontia to Sirica their well-deserving daughter. Jesus the Lord remember our child" (Fig. 44).

* P. 200.

† *Guide des Catacombes Romaines*, pp. 120, 123, 343, 428.

" Bonosa to her son Bonosus, we are sleeping in our Lord " (Fig. 45).

" In our Lord Christ—Domitia to a daughter most dear—a most innocent girl who . . . nine days five hours. In peace with . . ."

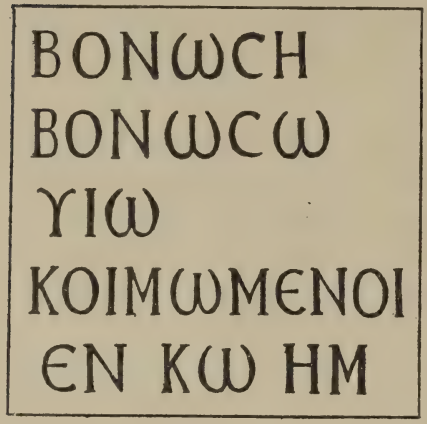

FIG. 45.

" In Christ. Epictetus to Gaiane his most excellent sister."

" To Aurelia Bonifatia his incomparable wife, a woman of genuine purity, who lived twenty-five years, two months, four days, two hours. Ampliatus with his son Gordianus erected this."

This touching accuracy in recording the length of life is shown in another inscription which must have been written by a mother :—

" In Christ. Died on the Kalends of September, Pompeianus an innocent (child), who lived six years, nine months, eight days, four hours. He sleeps in peace."*

†" In Christ. Asellus and Lea to Priscus their Father

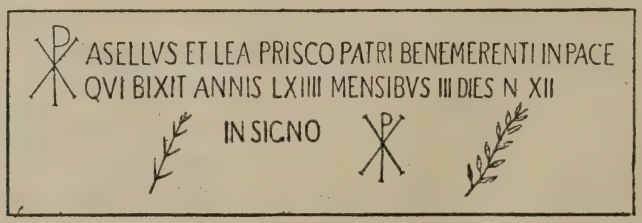

FIG. 46.

well-deserving. In peace. Who lived sixty-three years, three months, twelve days. In the sign of Christ " (Fig. 46).

* Maitland, p. 288. † Rossi and Withrow.

" Claudius Philotus (to his) dearest brother Theodore. We live in God, Jesus Christ Son of God, Saviour " (Fig. 47).

The following are copied from rubbings taken by the writer in the Catacomb of Sta. Agnese, and may be translated thus :—

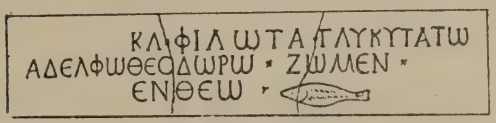

Fig. 47.

" In Christ. Mucia Paulina placed (this) for Licinius Herculaneus (her) well-deserving son, who lived twenty years. (He is) in peace." Below this, on the same stone, is the following : " The above named Paulina (is) in peace. She rested on the 14th day before the Kalends of December. Datus and Cæsarius (being) Consuls."

The date thus given would be A.D. 358.

Another also copied by the writer is from the Basilica of the Cemetery of Domitilla :—

" To (our) sweetest son Marianus who lived eleven years, four months, thirteen days ; buried before the Kalends of August. He shall rest in peace. Taurus and Florentius being Consuls. Flavius Concordius V.P. placed (this)."

The next two were copied in the Lapidarian Gallery :—

Fig. 48.

"To Agape, well-deserving, who lived four years. A sorrowing brother placed (this stone). Buried on the 12th before the Kalends of June. Agape is in peace."

" To my most happy and most sweet wife, who lived twenty-seven years. (She is) in peace."

How touching a picture of home life is the following : The

little girl with her pet dove in one hand and a bunch of grapes in the other; and the assured hope that all was well, for it is more than a prayer; "Peace be to Fortunata (our) sweetest daughter" (Fig. 48).

"Never a word of sorrow on these graves of the dead —never a word of repining—never a regret that they have been taken away. Only just a few words telling of their sure hope for their dear ones, and a prayer to God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, to keep them in their loving guardianship."*

* Dean of Gloucester in *The Early Christians in Rome*, p. 331.

CHAPTER IX

JEWISH INSCRIPTIONS

THERE was a considerable Hebrew Colony in Rome, both in Apostolic times and afterwards. They had their burial chambers distinct from those of the Christians, and some interesting inscriptions have been found there which are characteristic. They are usually in Greek, and frequently bear a figure of the seven-branched lamp which is so conspicuous in the sculpture under the Arch of Titus, known to every visitor in Rome.

The first of the following selection has two such figures, placed in memory of a mother and her babe. It is a large and well-cut stone, and is now in the Lateran Gallery, where it was copied by the writer (Fig. 49).

FIG. 49.

"Here lies Primitiva with her son, Euphrenon. Their sleep is in peace." The lamp, oil-jar and palm-branch are duplicated as indicating that the grave contained two

bodies. The same occurs in the second of the next two, both of which are given by Dean Burgon :—

" Alypis of Tiberias and his sons Justus and Alypis, Hebrews, together with their father lie here."

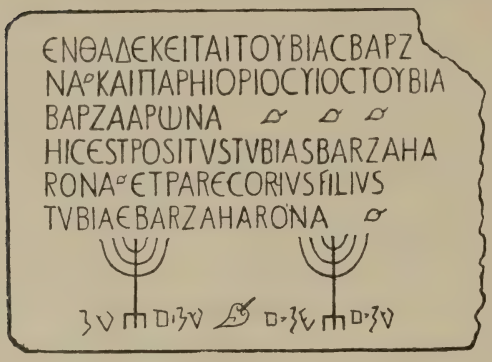

Fig. 50.

" Here lieth Tobias Barzaarona and Parecorius, the son of Tobias Barzaarona " (Fig. 50).

The letters of this inscription are Greek in the first three lines, Latin in the three last, and below each lamp is the word " peace " in Hebrew. On this, the Dean remarks :—*

" At the foot of this singular inscription, it will be observed that the candlestick is repeated twice ; and on both sides of either candlestick occurs the word *shalom*. Surely the title in Greek and Latin and Hebrew is a striking circumstance ! Observe that this Jewish epitaph commemorates the interment of a son with his father. How are we thereby reminded of the desire of old Barzillai to be ' buried by the grave of his father and of his mother ' :† a sentiment (sufficiently natural surely, in people of any nation !), which one is led to suspect was peculiarly prevalent among God's ancient people. Consider such places as the following : Gen. xlix. 31 : Judges viii. 32 : 2. Sam. ii. 32 : xvii. 23, xxi. 14 : 1 Kings xiii. 22 : 2 Kings ix. 28, etc."

Fig. 51.

* Pp. 164-166. † 2. Sam. xix. 37.

A similar combination of the three languages is quoted by Maitland :* " Here lies Faustina. Peace " (Fig. 51). The last word, as scholars will notice, is in very badly-written Hebrew. The others are in Greek letters, but the name is a Latin one.

Another which marks the burial place of a man of fifty, who is described as " gerousiarch " of the synagogue of the Augustenes, recalls the use of the word " gerousia " in Acts v. 21, which is translated in the A.V. and R.V. as " senate." Both words carry the sense of seniority.

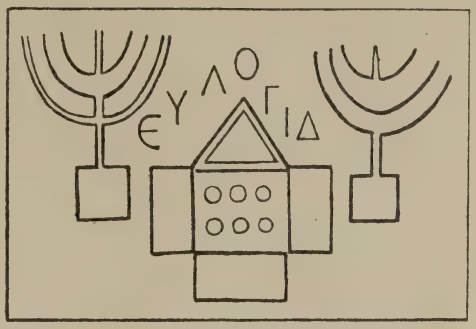

Fig. 52.

Another remarkable stone, also given by Burgon,† is shown here. It is not easily explained, but the single word is in clear Greek, " Blessing" (Fig. 52). It has been supposed that the six circles in two rows beside the sacred seven-branched candlestick might have some reference to the Shewbread described in Lev. xxiv. 1–9, and its position is mentioned in Ex. xl. 23, 24, but the number and order of the circles forbid this, and the Dean's conjecture is more probable that they have reference to the Passover cakes, and that these might be called the bread of blessing, just as St. Paul spoke of the Communion cup as " the cup of blessing" (1 Cor. x. 16). Two more are given on the same authority. Both are in Greek :

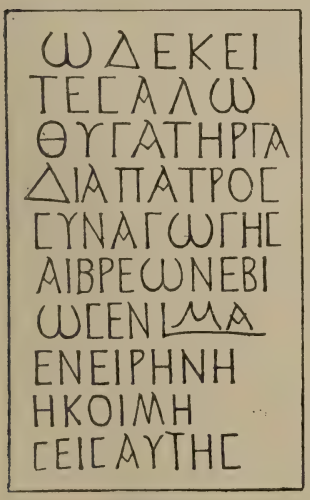

Fig 53.

* P. 77. † P. 169.

" Here lieth Salo(me), daughter of Gadius, father of the synagogue of the Hebrews. She lived 41 years. Her sleep is in peace " (Fig. 53).

The following is in strong Greek letters, but with several mis-spellings, and translated, is as follows :—

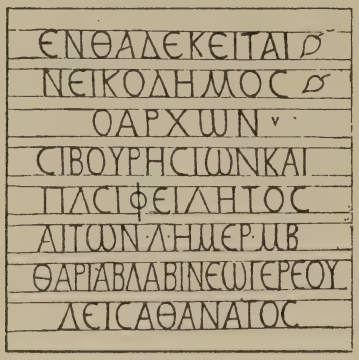

Fig. 54.

" Here lieth Nicodemus the ruler of the Siburenses, beloved of all, (aged) thirty years, forty-two days. Be of good cheer, blameless young man ! No one escapes death " (Fig. 54).

The contrast of this Nicodemus with another who was also ruler of a synagogue is too pathetic to be unnoticed. The Sibura, as Marucchi tells us,* was a district in Rome below the Esqualine, probably a sort of ancient Whitechapel.

* P. 273.

CHAPTER X

SUMMARY

THE evidence which has been given in the preceding pages as to the faith, life and hope of the early Christians, has, we trust, been so plain in itself that few concluding words are needed to suggest what practical conclusions we may find for ourselves. Though fifteen centuries separate us from the writers of those inscriptions, and the developments of modern thought and life are a great gulf across which it is difficult to carry our minds, the facts of human soul and body, of intellectual power and spiritual feeling remain much the same as they have ever been. Indeed it is possible that faith in the great facts and truths of Christianity was more vivid than it is with very many in these days. Perhaps even the members of the Roman Church understood the letter which was written to them by " the beloved brother "* better than do many Christians to-day. That letter, written probably in A.D. 58, shows that not only they had access to, but were familiar with, the sacred " writings " which are known to us as the " Old Testament," and probably treated them with more respect than is often given now. In fact they very likely were among " the babes " to whom have been revealed things by " the Lord of Heaven and Earth," which are hidden from " the wise and prudent " of to-day.† Within the few pages of that letter there are nearly sixty distinct references to the sacred writings of

* II. Pet. iii. 15. † Matt. xi. 25.

the past. Fifteen are to the Pentateuch ; twenty to the Psalms ; fourteen to Isaiah, and the remainder to seven of the other books. This makes it probable that though the Jewish element in the early days of the Roman Church was, at first, perhaps, the largest, the Apostle regards it as " broadly and in the main a Gentile Church. It is the Gentile element which gives it its colour."* And passages such as Rom. i. 5–7, 13 ; xv. 14–16, as well as others which have been previously mentioned in Chapter II, make this plain.

What the result of that knowledge was, we have already shown in earlier chapters. It was a simple faith in God, revealed in Christ by the Holy Spirit. It generated a life of love and hope. The controversies which have rent the Church in later ages came mainly from human distortions of those old truths, and the introduction of other authorities than such as those to whom the first Christians gave their whole-hearted allegiance.

Is it necessary to press the moral ? " We must keep pace with the times " say many of our modern leaders. " We would walk with God " is the testimony of those old days.

Could any words, however multiplied, or any philosophy however flattering, give a more complete creed, a closer bond for unity, a stronger motive for loving service, or a brighter hope for hereafter than those five words expressed in the emblem which the Christians often placed over the loved one laid to rest ?

" Jesus Christ Son of God Saviour "

For if Christ is the Son of God, He is " able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think," and if He is Saviour also, is it not the first duty of everyone who is conscious by personal experience of the fact, to bear witness in every way that " the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world " ?

* Sanday and Headlam's *Commentary on the Romans*, p. xxxiii.

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